

Kyrgyz language

Kyrgyz (English: /ˈkɪərɡɪz, kərˈɡiːz/^[3] autonym: *Кыргызча*/*Qırğızça* [qɯɾɣɯzˈtʃɑ]), also spelled as **Kirghiz**, **Kirgiz** and **Qirghiz**, is a Turkic language spoken in Central Asia. Kyrgyz is the official language of Kyrgyz Republic and a significant minority language in the Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture in Xinjiang, China and in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan. Kyrgyz belongs to the Kipchak branch of Turkic language family. There is very high degree of mutual intelligibility between Kazakh and Kyrgyz.

Kyrgyz is also spoken by many ethnic Kyrgyz through the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Russia.

Kyrgyz was originally written in the Turkic runes,^[4] gradually replaced by a Perso-Arabic alphabet (in use until 1928 in USSR, still in use in China). Between 1928 and 1940 a Latin-script alphabet, the Uniform Turkic Alphabet, was used. In 1940, Soviet authorities replaced Latin script with Cyrillic alphabet for all Turkic countries. When Kyrgyzstan became independent following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, there was a popular idea among Kyrgyz to switch to the Latin script. Although the plan has not yet been implemented, it remains in occasional discussion.^[5]

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History

| Kyrgyz | |
|--|---|
| Кыргызча, قرغز تیلی, Qırğızça | |
| Pronunciation | [qɯɾɣɯzˈtʃɑ] |
| Native to | Kyrgyzstan (official), Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Xinjiang |
| Ethnicity | Kyrgyz |
| Native speakers | 4.3 million (2009 census) ^[1] |
| Language family | <div>Turkic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Turkic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kipchak<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kyrgyz–Kipchak<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kyrgyz</div> |
| Writing system | Kyrgyz alphabets (Cyrillic script, Perso-Arabic script, formerly Latin script, Kyrgyz Braille) |
| Official status | |
| <div>Official language in</div> | <div> <div>🇰🇾 Kyrgyzstan <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture </div> <div>Organisations:</div> <div> <div>🇹🇷 Turkic Council</div> <div>🇺🇿 Collective Security Treaty Organization</div> </div> </div> |
| Language codes | |
| ISO 639-1 | ky (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639- |

It is highly likely that Ancient Kyrgyz spoke the tongue closer to modern Khakas, which belongs to the Siberian sub branch of Common Turkic. In 925 when Khitans defeated the Ancient Kyrgyz and expelled them from Mongolian steppes, some Ancient Kyrgyz elites settled in Altai and East Turkestan where they mixed with local Kipchaks resulting in a language shift.

After Mongol conquest in 1207 and series of revolts against Yuan oppressive policy, Kyrgyz-speaking tribes started to migrate to Tien Shan, which was already populated by various Turco-Mongol tribes. As Chaghatai Ulus subjects, Kyrgyz converted to Islam. Persian and Arabic vocabulary enriched the Kyrgyz, but to a much lesser extent than Kazakh, Uzbek and Uighur. Many Mongolian loanwords are found in the Kyrgyz lexicon.

Kyrgyz shares similarities with various sub branches of Common Turkic - Kipchak, Karluk (due to Chaghatai Turki and language convergence) and Siberian sub branch (ancient Kyrgyz ancestry)

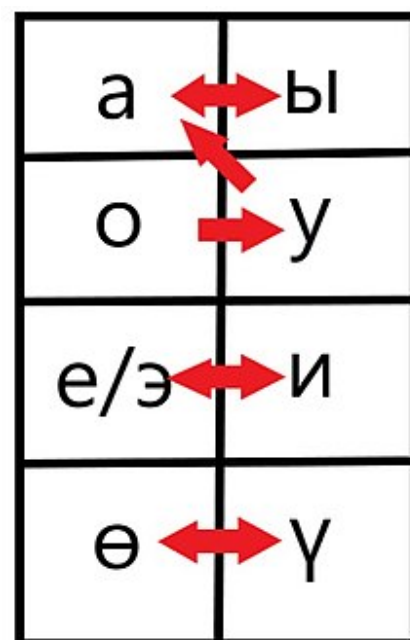
| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | 2/php/langcode s_name.php?iso _639_1=ky) |
| ISO 639-2 | kir (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcode_s_name.php?code_ID=237) |
| ISO 639-3 | kir |
| Glottolog | kirg1245 (http://glottolog.org/resource/linguoid/id/kirg1245) ^[2] |
| Linguasphere | 44-AAB-cd |

Comparison with Kazakh

Kazakh and Kyrgyz may be better seen a mutually intelligible dialects or varieties of a single tongue which are regarded as separate languages for sociopolitical reasons. They differ mainly phonetically while the lexicon and grammar are much the same, although both have standardized written forms that may differ in some ways. Until the 20th century, both languages used a common written form of Chaghatai Turki ^[6].

While both languages share common loan words from Persian and Arabic, Kyrgyz lexicon includes much wider range of Mongolian loanwords. List of words in Kyrgyz from Mongolian absent in Kazakh vocabulary:

Жаргал - *жыргал*, *бэлэг* - *белек*, *хайгуул* - *кайгуул*, *болзол* - *болжол*, *мохоо* - *макоо*, *нарийн* - *нарын*, *унаа* - *унаа*, *шалтаг* - *шылтоо*.



This chart demonstrates how vowels shift left or right in order to abide by Kyrgyz grammar rules.

Phonology

Kyrgyz vowel phonemes^[7]

| | Front | | Back | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | unrounded | rounded | unrounded | rounded |
| Close | <u>i</u> | <u>y</u> | <u>ɯ</u> | <u>u</u> |
| Mid | <u>e</u> | <u>ø</u> | | <u>o</u> |
| Open | (a) | | <u>ɑ</u> | |

/a/ appears only in borrowings from Persian or when followed by a front vowel later in the word (regressive assimilation), e.g. /ajdøʃ/ 'sloping' instead of */ɑjdøʃ/.^[8] Note that in most dialects, its status as a vowel distinct from /ɑ/ is



Play media

Azim, a speaker of the Kyrgyz language, recorded for Wikitongues

questionable.^[9]

Vowel Harmony (Peace Corps Method)

| Left Shift (<) | Right Shift (>) | Shift Direction |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| a | ы | Straight Across Left-Right Shift |
| o | y | ("y" Left-shifts up-diagonally to "a") |
| e | й | Straight Across Left-Right Shift |
| ө (ə) | ү | Straight Across Left-Right Shift |

The United States Peace Corps trains its volunteers using a "Left-Right Shift" method when carrying out language training in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Kyrgyz consonant phonemes^[10]

| | | <u>Labial</u> | <u>Dental/</u> <u>alveolar</u> | <u>Post-</u> <u>alveolar</u> | <u>Dorsal</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| <u>Nasal</u> | | <u>m</u> | <u>n</u> | | <u>ŋ</u> |
| <u>Plosive</u> | <u>voiceless</u> | <u>p</u> | <u>t</u> | | <u>k</u> |
| | <u>voiced</u> | <u>b</u> | <u>d</u> | | <u>g</u> |
| <u>Affricate</u> | <u>voiceless</u> | | <u>(tʃ)</u> | <u>tʃ</u> | |
| | <u>voiced</u> | | | <u>dʒ</u> | |
| <u>Fricative</u> | <u>voiceless</u> | <u>(f)</u> | <u>s</u> | <u>ʃ</u> | <u>(x)</u> |
| | <u>voiced</u> | <u>(v)</u> | <u>z</u> | | |
| <u>Approximant</u> | | | <u>l</u> | | <u>j</u> |
| <u>Trill</u> | | | <u>r</u> | | |

- /f, v, tʃ, x/ occur only in foreign borrowings.^[10]

Writing system

The Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan use a Cyrillic alphabet, which uses all the Russian letters plus Ң, Ө and Ү.

In Xinjiang of China, an Arabic alphabet is used.

Although the Latin script is not in official use, some Kyrgyz texts are written in the Turkish variant of the Latin alphabet which was designed by Pamukkale University, and uses Turkish spelling norms e.g. for diphthongization (*ey*, *ay* etc.) and with the addition of *J* corresponding to Russian Ж (/zh/). Native Kyrgyz sound values are almost identical to Turkish, the exceptions being the velar nasal /ŋ/ and the voiceless uvular stop /q/ which do not exist in Turkish. In these cases they are written as "ñ" and "q" respectively.

| Cyrillic | Latin | IPA | English |
|---|--|---|---|
| Бардык адамдар өз беделинде жана укуктарында эркин жана тең укуктуу болуп жаралат. Алардын аң-сезими менен абийири бар жана бири- бирине бир туугандык мамиле кылууга тийиш. | Bardıq adamdar öz bedelinde jana uquqtarında erkin jana teñ uquqtuu bolup jaralat. Alardın ań-sezimi menen abiyiri bar jana biri-birine bir tuuğandıq mamile qıluuğa tiyiş. | bardwq adamdar øz bedelinde d͡ʒana uquqtarında erkin d͡ʒana teŋ uquqtu : boʎup d͡ʒaraʎat aʎardwŋ ansezimi menen abijiri bar d͡ʒana biribirine bir tu : ʁandwq mamile qɯʎu : ʁa tijiʃ | All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. |

Morphology and syntax

Case

Nouns in Kyrgyz take a number of case endings that change based on vowel harmony and the sort of consonant they follow (see the section on phonology).

| Case | Underlying form | Possible forms | "boat" | "air" | "bucket" | "hand" | "head" | "salt" | "eye" |
|------------|-----------------|---|---------|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Nominative | — | | кеме | аба | челек | кол | баш | туз | көз |
| Genitive | -NIn | -нын, -нин, -дын, -дин, -тын, -тин, -нун, -нүн, -дун, -дүн, -тун, -түн | кеменин | абанын | челектин | колдун | баштын | туздун | көздүн |
| Dative | -GA | -га, -ка, -ге, -ке, -го, -ко, -гө, -кө | кемеге | абага | челекке | колго | башка | тузга | көзгө |
| Accusative | -NI | -ны, -ни, -ды, -ди, -ты, -ти, -ну, -нү, -ду, -дү, -ту, -тү | кемени | абаны | челекти | колду | башты | тузду | көздү |
| Locative | -DA | -да, -де, -та, -те, -до, -дө, -то, -тө | кемеде | абада | челекте | колдо | башта | тузда | көздө |
| Ablative | -DAn | -дан, -ден, -тан, -тен, -дон, -дөн, -тон, -төн | кемеден | абадан | челектен | колдон | баштан | туздан | көздөн |

Normally the decision between the velar ([g ~ ɣ], [k]) and uvular ([G ~ ʁ] and [χ ~ q]) pronunciation of ⟨г⟩ and ⟨к⟩ is based on the backness of the following vowel—i.e. back vowels imply a uvular rendering and front vowels imply a velar rendering—and the vowel in suffixes is decided based on the preceding vowel in the word. However, with the dative suffix in Kyrgyz, the vowel is decided normally, but the decision between velars and uvulars can be decided based on a contacting consonant, for example банк /bank/ 'bank' + GA yields банкка /bankka/, not /bankqa/ as predicted by the following vowel.

Pronouns

Kyrgyz has eight personal pronouns:

Personal pronouns

| Singular | | Plural | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kyrgyz (transliteration) | English | Kyrgyz (transliteration) | English |
| Мен (Men) | I | Биз (Biz) | We |
| Сен (Sen) | You (<i>singular informal</i>) | Силер (Siler) | You (<i>plural informal</i>) |
| Сиз (Siz) | You (<i>singular formal</i>) | Сиздер (Sizder) | You (<i>plural formal</i>) |
| Ал (Al) | He/She/It | Алар (Alar) | They |

The declension of the pronouns is outlined in the following chart. Singular pronouns (with the exception of сиз, which used to be plural) exhibit irregularities, while plural pronouns don't. Irregular forms are highlighted in bold.

Declension of pronouns

| | Singular | | | | Plural | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|---------|-------------|--------|----------|-----------|---------|
| | 1st | 2nd inf | 2nd frm | 3rd | 1st | 2nd inf | 2nd frm | 3rd |
| Nom | мен | сен | сиз | ал | биз | силер | сиздер | алар |
| Acc | мени | сени | сизди | аны | бизди | силерди | сиздерди | аларды |
| Gen | менин | сенин | сиздин | анын | биздин | силердин | сиздердин | алардын |
| Dat | мага | сара | сизге | ара | бизге | силерге | сиздерге | аларга |
| Loc | менде | сенде | сизде | анда | бизде | силерде | сиздерде | аларда |
| Abl | менден | сенден | сизден | андан | бизден | силерден | сиздерден | алардан |

In addition to the pronouns, there are several more sets of morphemes dealing with person.

Morphemes indicating person

| | pronouns | copulas | present tense | possessive endings | past/conditional | imperative |
|----------------------|----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1st sg | мен | -mIn | -mIn | -(l)m | -(l)m | -AyIN |
| 2nd sg | сен | -slŋ | -slŋ | -(l)ŋ | -(l)ŋ | —, -GIn |
| 2nd formal sg | сиз | -slz | -slz | -(l)ŋlz | -(l)ŋlz | -GIIA |
| 3rd sg | ал | — | -t | -(s)l(n) | — | -sIn |
| 1st pl | биз | -Blz | -Blz | -(l)blz | -(l)K | -AyIK |
| 2nd pl | силер | -slŋAr | -slŋAr | -(l)ŋAr | -(l)ŋAr | |
| 2nd formal pl | сиздер | -slzdAr | -slzdAr | -(l)ŋlzdAr | -(l)nIzdAr | |
| 3rd pl | алар | — | -(l)ʂAt | -(s)l(n) | — | -sIn, -IʂsIn |

Verbs

Verbs are conjugated by analyzing the root verb: 1) determine whether the end letter is a vowel or consonant 2) add appropriate suffix while following vowel-harmony/shift rules.

Simple-Present Tense Conjugations (Peace Corps)

| | Per. Pronoun | Vowel | Consonant |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|-----------|
| 1st sg | Мен | -м | -м |
| 2nd sg | Сен | -йс<ң | -йс<ң |
| 2nd formal sg | Сиз | -йс<з | -йс<з |
| 3rd sg | Ал | -йт | -йт |
| 1st pl | Биз | -йб>з | -<б>з |
| 2nd pl | Силер | | |
| 2nd formal pl | Сизлер | | |
| 3rd pl | Алар | | |

Demonstrative pronouns

Subordinate clauses

To form complement clauses, Kyrgyz nominalises verb phrases. For example, "I don't know what I saw" would be rendered as "Мен эмнени көргөнүмдү билбейм" (*Men emneni körgönümdü bilbeym*): I what-ACC.DEF see-ing-1st.SG-ACC.DEF know-NEG-1st.SG, or roughly "I don't know my having seen what," where the verb phrase "I saw what" is treated as a nominal object of the verb "to know." The sentence above is also an excellent example of Kyrgyz vowel harmony; notice that all the vowel sounds are front vowels.

Several nominalisation strategies are used depending on the temporal properties of the relativised verb phrase: -GAn(dIK) for general past tense, -AAr for future/potential unrealised events, and -A turgan(dwq) for non-perfective events are the most common. The copula has an irregular relativised form экен(дик) which may be used equivalently to forms of the verb бол- *be* (болгон(дук), болоор). Relativised verb forms may, and often do, take nominal possessive endings as well as case endings.

See also

- [BGN/PCGN romanization of Kyrgyz](#)
- [Kyrgyz people](#)
- [Romanization of Kyrgyz](#)

Notes and references

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2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Kirghiz" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kirg1245>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Kyrgyz>
4. Кызласов И. Л., *Рунические письменности евразийских степей* (Kyzlasov I.L. *Runic scripts of Eurasian steppes*), Восточная литература (Eastern Literature), Moscow, 1994, pp. 80 on, ISBN 978-5-02-017741-3, with further bibliography.
5. Latin alphabet. "Kyrgyzstan has to switch to Latin alphabet since 2040, MP" (<http://kabar.kg/eng/news/kyrgyzstan-has-to-change-switch-to-latin-alphabet-since-2040-mp/>). Информационное Агентство Кабар.

6. Robert Lindsay. "Mutual Intelligibility Among the Turkic Languages" (https://www.academia.edu/4068771/Mutual_Intelligibility_Among_the_Turkic_Languages?email_work_card=title).
7. Kara (2003:10)
8. Washington (2007:11)
9. Washington (2006b:2)
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External links

- El-Sozduk – English-Kyrgyz online dictionary, phrasebook, Android app (<https://el-sozduk.kg/>)
- [1] (https://www.academia.edu/27246121/Vitality_of_the_Kyrgyz_Language_in_Bishkek) Ferdinand, S. & Komlósi, F. 2016. Vitality of the Kyrgyz Language in Bishkek. *IJORS*, 5/2, pp. 210–226.
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- Кербен Translit (<http://translit.kerben.org/>) - Easy Kyrgyz-Cyrillic–Latin converter
- Kyrgyz Cyrillic–Arabic–Latin converter (<http://www.transliteration.kpr.eu/ky/>)

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 - [Kyrgyz-Turkish Dictionary \(https://web.archive.org/web/20120223055303/http://www.gaspirali.net/ky/sozluq/\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20120223055303/http://www.gaspirali.net/ky/sozluq/)
 - [Kyrgyz<>Turkish dictionary \(http://pauctle.com/kgtr\)](http://pauctle.com/kgtr) (Pamukkale University)
 - [Russian-Kyrgyz Kyrgyz-Russian Dictionary \(https://web.archive.org/web/20091211052725/http://i.nostran.org/idiom.php?l=kyr\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20091211052725/http://i.nostran.org/idiom.php?l=kyr)
 - [Kyrgyz - Apertium \(http://wiki.apertium.org/wiki/Kyrgyz\)](http://wiki.apertium.org/wiki/Kyrgyz)
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